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THE DIDACTIC ORGANISATION OF PICTORIAL REALITY IN THE NEW LANGUAGE TEACHING MEDIA.

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High on the list of today's educational priorities is the effective programing of pictorial stimuli as language teaching tools. The value of any image depends on its content of information, and essential for clear comprehension of any picture are the principles of causality, parallelism, and contrast or negative comparison. Both artist and teacher must avoid visual ambiguity, unnatural visualization, distortion of meaning, and must stress meaningful interpolation. A line drawing is more valuable than a photograph because of its amplified potential as an abstraction and its low cost, but it is useless as an effective classroom audiovisual aid if it needs detailed explanations. Coordinated pictorial devices for language instruction could best be developed by a team of audiovisual researchers, including artists, methodologists, graphic experts, and psychologists. For a related document, see FL 000 823. (DS)

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The Didactic Organisation of Pictorial Reality in the New Language Teaching Media

Twelve years have passed since James J. Gibson propounded his theory of pictorial perception,[1] and particularly his propositions regarding the greater or lesser fidelity of pictures referring to textual segments. That was before audio-visual language learning theory presented language teachers and workers in the field of applied linguistics and psycho-linguistics with special problems arising out of text/picture relationships in audio-visual language teaching media.

The problem of the didactic organisation of pictorial reality in the new language teaching tools, with particular reference to the readability of graphic symbolisation in such materials, and the pedagogic and psychological implications arising out of the learners' confrontation with such media is one of the most pressing in the whole gamut of educational research priorities.

The authors of this paper hope that it may shed more light on some of the key issues attendant upon the creation of audio-visual materials supposed to mediate specific foreign language segments in a teaching situation.

J. B. Carroll informs us that other things being equal materials presented visually are more easily learned than comparable materials presented aurally.[2]

Even though the objective of teaching is the attainment of mastery over the auditory and spoken components of a foreign language, an adequate theory of language learning should take account of how the student handles visual counterparts of the auditory elements he is learning and help to prescribe the optimal utilization of these counterparts.

The picture as a means of communication

How does a picture, a means of communication function? Under what conditions can a picture be said to function for the purposes of facilitating the learning or the teaching of language content? We are speaking both of material used for description, narration containing dialogue, of material used for contact work, introducing structures or material used for consolidation. We may say that the value of a picture lies in its information content. The information contained in the picture may be considered as the measure of order and organisation of reality recreated in pictured form. The organisation of this pictorial reality depends in the final analysis on our lesson aim. Every sample of pictured reality contains semantic information, and the information passed on to the learners through the medium of a picture is limited from the point of view of lexis and structural content, supposed to be conveyed and taught within a specific time at a specific level. When we speak of limitation we do,

1 James J. Gibson, "A Theory of Pictorial Perception", *AV Communication Review*, 2 (1954), pp. 3-23.
2 J. B. Carroll, "Contributions of Research to Foreign Language Teaching", v. a. M.L.T., May 1965, p. 280.

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of course, think of the minimal and maximal demands which the teacher may make within the field of pictorial reality used as a teaching tool. And the limitation of information content depends on the organisation of this pictured reality. This organisation of the re-created reality includes selection of elements, the ordering of such elements as well as their methodological treatment for the purpose of conveying language content on a communicable level. Information theory differentiates between semantic and selective information. We are dealing here with selective information, in connection with a given situation, in other words with a didactically ordered and organised pictorial reality.

Let us for a moment, look at page 4 of that excellent book *Le Français Accéléré* by Gaston Mauger,[3] in which author and artist have tried to mediate the imperative and the negative imperative. We have a picture of two men looking at a pretty girl, with one man saying to his friend: «Regardez.» From the kinesic point of view, that is to say, from the point of view of body and facial movements, this is well done and drawn perfectly clearly. Looking opposite, we have «Ne regardez pas!» – where one of the gentlemen covers the face of the other with a paper, while a well dressed matron passes by. The thought might enter our minds as to why one man should cover the face of the other, because the lady shown walking along cannot be said to be particularly ugly, and the motivation for the pictured reality appears not clear. On the third picture, we have the teacher saying to his students: «Écoutez!» – again well drawn. Whilst on number four, – «N'écoutez pas!» – shows a cleaner listening at a hotel door – so that the picture doesn't really mediate the imperative. It is, of course, a satirical drawing with an exclamation mark after the text. Nonetheless, the picture does not mediate the form which we want to put across. The fifth and sixth drawings are supposed to mediate: «Attention, regardez à gauche, regardez à droite!» Mais, l'homme regarde à gauche et il regarde à droite – so that these pictures do not mediate this particular imperative either.

There are both in oral and in written communication, as in everything touching upon human endeavour, elements of ambiguity, possibility, probability and near certainty. Equally, there are these elements in pictured reality, whether it conveys concrete or abstract content, and since we wish to use pictorial reality as a mediational factor in language teaching, we must guard against visual ambiguity and be *aware* of the *part played* by *organised developing* pictorial uncertainty and high probability in the creation and use of visual media for the language lesson. Both the creator and the teacher using such media, – in fact of any language teaching tools, must constantly keep in mind that language produces an organisation of experience. We are inclined to think of language merely as a technique of expression, whilst it is first of all a classification and arrangement of a stream of sensory experience which results in a certain world order, a certain segment of the world which is easily expressible by the type of symbolic means which language employs.

For the purpose of earlier modern language teaching, word and picture are two key constituents which are like a range-finding device, pinpointing meaning. The two, in reducing each other's ambiguity, tie down the application, and in a teaching situation implying the resourceful use of a sufficiently large range of didactically ordered visual media in the language class, particularly during the first two or three years, visual mediation can and often will make a signal contribution towards the progressive elimination of any significant mother tongue interference. We do not have to translate into the foreign language.

How do terms like 'uncertainty' and 'probability' figure in modern language teaching pictures? Let us imagine a pictorial sequence, – glisser, tomber, se relever – to

3 Mauger, Bruézière, *Le Français Accéléré*. Hachette (Paris, 1963).

slip, to fall and to get up again. The probability of the appearance of the word ‹tomber› is considerable. Equally the probability of the verbs – s'endormir, rire, se reposer, is nought. The information element of ‹se relever› is bigger than nought, since there is a possibility at least that after the fall the person may not get up. If we think of the beginning of a visual sequence showing a man lying on the ground and a cyclist standing over him, having just bowled over the man, it is, of course, entirely up to the author and artist how they organise this visual sequence in order to force the reply – ‹non, il ne va pas se relever› – because the situation could be drawn in such a way that the reply would be – ‹oui, il va se relever›.

Principles of organisation

What principles are embodied in the organisation of a picture and contribute, therefore, to the degree of information emanating from it; in other words, which principles are a sine qua non for the clear comprehension of the pictured content?

There is first the principle of causality. The principle of causality represents the relationship between different events which are tied one to the other through cause, effect and consequence. Experience shows that the more closely elements of reality are connected with each other, the more easy it is to remember these elements, and we know that if there is a lack of cause and effect relationship in the picture content, many elements of an organised reality are not sufficiently noticed and hence, certain linguistic phenomena supposed to be conveyed through the picture are not understood and related to the pictorial representation. One of the main aims of a teacher who uses such media is to make the pupils talk meaningfully.

Let us consider for a moment the following sequence and see what we can get out of it. A man lies on the ground, a cyclist stands over him – ‹l'homme est étendu par terre, – pourquoi? Il a eu un accident; un cycliste l'a renversé – il a été renversé par un cycliste – il a été blessé.› Picture number two shows us this man at the hospital, with one leg encased in plaster. ‹Le voilà au lit – pourquoi? Parce qu'il s'est cassé la jambe. Est-ce qu'il peut marcher? Non, il ne peut pas marcher. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il a la jambe droite plâtrée.› Show this man leaving hospital, in the third picture, happily returning home again. ‹Il rentre chez lui. Maintenant il peut marcher.› Exploiting the cause, effect and consequence relationship we could now refer back to this man's stay in the hospital: ‹Quand il avait la jambe plâtrée il ne pouvait pas se lever (marcher) parce qu'il s'était cassé la jambe. Pourquoi s'était-il cassé la jambe? Parce qu'un cycliste l'avait renversé.› It is of course, a question of exploiting the visual media at the right time and for a specific purpose.

The second principle which is important in the organisation of pictorial reality is that of parallelism which strengthens the principle of causality. What is the essence of parallelism? It is a positive comparison. A certain event is shown twice on the same picture but in differing form: A pedestrian is stepping onto the street in spite of the red light and exactly at the same moment when a number of vehicles come to a halt at the traffic lights. If the man had been shown alone, the comment might well have been – ‹il n'a pas vu le feu rouge›, but the parallel action of the vehicles on the road eliminates certain possible observations and concentrates our attention on what the Germans so beautifully call lack of ‚Verkehrsdisziplin' of the pedestrian.

The third principle inherent in the organisation of modern language pictures is that of contrast or negative comparison. Imagine a situation in a restaurant in which we want to show absolutely clearly that one customer is going to leave the restaurant without paying. We must include in this sequence of pictorial reality another customer who is shown paying his bill, and more than that, we ought to reinforce,

by showing the waiter about to receive the money from the one who is paying, shouting towards the one about to leave. That will enable us to teach meaningfully – «il s'en va sans payer». Just as a line, a simple geometric figure, is determined by two points, so also a simple piece of information is determined by two elements, by cause and consequence, in the principle of causality, by two parallel events, in the principle of parallelism. A more complicated geometric figure, the triangle or the circle are determined by three points, and similarly a more complicated piece of information becomes more communicative, on a language content level, if the picture contains three or more separate events, determined by the time factor, or three or more parallel actions.

There is no doubt that the amount of material learned through audio-visual mediation increases with redundancy, but the amount of information decreases. In terms of information measure redundancy in the materials to be learned does *not* increase the efficiency of learning.

Let us imagine this situation: a man is shown drinking a lemonade. It is hot. The sun is shining – «il boit une limonade – pourquoi? – parce qu'il a soif, – parce qu'il fait chaud.» I will not go beyond that in this first picture. Number two, we show the man sitting in front of an empty glass – «le verre est vide– pourquoi? – parce qu'il a bu la limonade.» Show the man wiping his brow in the third sequence – «il s'essuie le front – pourquoi? – parce qu'il a chaud.» Show the man in a fourth picture with two empty glasses in front of him – «il a bu deux verres, – parce qu'il avait soif.»

Avoidance of speech balloons

If we have a pictorial situation showing a customer ordering a meal, resulting in dialogue between him and a waiter, we might think we are forced to use the speech balloon sprouting from the heads of those concerned. We must be very, very careful not to complicate matters and resort to artificial means of pictorial clarification, which might, in their complexity, defeat the purpose of the exercise, namely to use the picture as a particularly clear and efficient link between the foreign language expression and its comprehension by the recipient. There are other ways of mediating moments of dialogue visually, than through the use of the speech balloon.[4]

On page 5 of *Le Français Accéléré*[5] we see a teacher introducing himself to a foreign student – we have the balloon emanating from the teacher's mouth – «je suis M. Martin», and a question mark above the uncomprehending student's head. In the following picture the teacher shows his visiting card to the student to make him understand. Artist and authors were very concerned to make quite clear the lack of comprehension on the part of the student. Imagine a reorganised pictorial reality where in number two we have the teacher writing his name clearly on the blackboard and a gesture indicating comprehension by the student. There would then be no need at all for additional graphic symbolism. If we look at lesson 17 of *Voix et Images de France*[6] we see an attempt to mediate pictorially «Je ne me promène jamais» (I never go for a walk). A young man (Rémi) is shown walking along a country road, and the drawing inside the speech balloon is crossed out. If this drawing means anything to the learners it will be «Il ne se promène pas» (he is not walking), possibly «Je ne me promène pas» (I am not walking) to some. It certainly does not convey the category "never" visually. It would be very foolish to say that everything can easily be shown through pictures. Here we have a good example of one of the difficulties the audio-visual materials researcher can come up against. Similarly the artist's attempt, on

4 C. Malandain, *Utilisation des Films Fixes pour l'Enseignement des Langues Vivantes aux Enfants*, Problèmes Psychologiques (Paris, 1966), pp. 136–139.
5 See note 3.
6 Voix et Images de France, C.R.E.D.I.F. Saint-Cloud u. Didier (Paris).

the same page, to mediate pictorially «Je n'aime personne» (I don't like anybody), fails entirely to convey the category «ne personne». However, it is certainly possible to teach «ne personne», either in dialogue or in the third person through pictures embodying the cause, effect and consequence principle. Show someone knocking at an office door, and keep him waiting somewhat longer than he cares to wait ... for a specific reason clearly shown in the visual 'life moment' ... We can then arrive at a moment when the concept «ne personne» is very clearly anchored in the verbal reactions arising out of this incident.

In lesson 18 of *VIF*[6] we have a very good pictorial mediation of the familiar imperative «Aide-moi». The kinesic indications showing the girl's (Catherine) plea to her father are absolutely clearly and dynamically drawn, as is the follow-up sequence, showing Catherine's mother telling her husband «Explique-lui un peu». It is only in the visual mediation of «Assieds-toi là» that ambiguity might arise and that the artist might have improved upon Catherine's body movements, all of which goes to show that the standards demanded of the creators of visual media for the modern language class are very high indeed.

In lesson 25 of the same course we find once more an attempt to mediate visually dialogue between two people discussing what to order in a café. In order to represent visually «Moi, je ne prends ni café ni thé» (I drink neither tea nor coffee) the artist uses the speech balloon which contains a pot of tea and a percolator hovering above the lady's hat, and both tea pot and coffee percolator are crossed out. A very large number of artists and even more language teachers would hold that if «La forme dialoguée» can be conveyed visually (and not infrequently it can) ... without resorting to the most unsatisfactory speech balloon, this device should not be resorted to. – In this particular visual presentation the woman's hand movement quite clearly indicates her intention of not taking tea or coffee. We do not at all need the balloon device to put across «Je ne prends ni café ni thé». Let the comment arise as a result of an air hostess in a Caravelle flight offering tea and coffee to one particular traveller during a specific flight. His kinesic reactions, if well drawn, would be an eloquent «geste linguistique», and this element of pictorial reality, properly organised, would enable us to convey the 'neither ... nor' category quite clearly to our students, and this against an unadulterated and uncomplicated visual background.

It would be entirely erroneous to say that all dialogue confrontations require the use of the speech balloon for clear mediation of linguistic content. – If we show three vehicles in side view, one parked in front of the other, we can then show the driver of the centre car sticking his head out of the car window speaking to either the driver of the van parked behind him or to the driver of the car parked in front of him. We can equally clearly show that the driver of the centre car wants to drive away but cannot do so until one of the other two cars moves away. Thus we can quite unambiguously mediate the form «pourriez-vous». We must achieve an organisation of pictorial reality enabling us to mediate either «pourriez-vous avancer, je ne peux pas sortir» or «pourriez-vous reculer, je ne peux pas sortir» (Would you mind moving forward (backward), I can't get out). This we can easily do both artistically and linguistically. – The unambiguous mediation of this particular speech form results from the organisation of a moment in reality within which the reactions of the carrier of the verbal message are strictly limited and defined. The driver of the centre car is clearly stuck, and a first rate artist can make it cogently clear that he wants to drive away. From the point of view of the didactic organisation of the scene we must merely make sure that the driver of the centre car is speaking to either the driver of the van behind him or the chauffeur of the car in front of him. – In restricting the verbal signals of the carrier of the key message through visual

organisation we are correspondingly restricting the possible range of verbal signals which the student will at once associate with this situation. If we accept the Saussurean concept of 'the sign' we can say that the picture also constitutes a sign, consisting, like every sign, of a ‹signifiant› (the sound image ... that which means) and a ‹signifié› (the notion ... that which is the object of meaning). The ‹signifiant› is the total of lines and elements of colour appearing in the screened picture. The ‹signifié› is the meaning conveyed to the viewer/listener by the organisation of the total of these lines and colours. – In this particular case we may agree with Guénot that ‹le signifié de l'image correspond à celui du message sonore que l'élève ignore›[7] (pourriez-vous avancer/reculer?). We may agree further that if this moment of recreated pictorial reality is drawn in such a way as to elicit from the overwhelming body of students the message 'could you move forward (or back), I cannot get out', we have, in this instance, invested the picture with the quality of a parallel language. We have here truly mediated understanding of the foreign language signal through the meaningful interpolation of the picture.

If, however, the authors of an audio-visual French course were to demand of the artist that he create a visual approximation of the question ‹qu'avez-vous fait ce matin?› (What did you do this morning?) then even the creation of a visual approximation of this question is a near impossibility. If the questioner is a woman asking another woman the artist would have to draw the latter engaged in various activities. Pastness would have to be conveyed, and all the morning's drawn activities would have to be shown with question marks. Such a drawing could not be said to have linguistic equivalence. It could not be said to have the quality of a parallel language because the woman's morning activities are too numerous to be encased in a single frame, supposed to convey *clearly* the message ‹qu'avez-vous fait ce matin?›. Here we cannot restrict the verbal signal of the carrier of the key message ... (what did you do this morning?) ... through unambiguous visual organisation. The multiplicity of drawn past events, in this case washing up, various kinds of house work and shopping, all with their attendant question marks, makes for inability to concentrate on one essential theme. – Here we cannot restrict to one overwhelmingly likely one the possible range of questions which the learner will associate with pictorial representation. The several drawn sub-situations ... for this is how the recipient sees this screened visual, will make for fragmentation and disorientation of his thought processes and an inability to arrive at a verbal synthesis. The student does not comprehend the foreign language signal ‹qu'avez-vous fait ce matin?› because the pictorial reality does not mediate the question adequately. Having received the pictorial signal the brightest might get as far as 'did you wash up? Did you dust the rooms? Did you go shopping?' They will be a tiny fraction of the learning group only, and none will decode this visual signal correctly. – The learners' complex act of curiosity operative when trying to learn elements of language through pictorial mediation will only continue to operate as a motivational force as long as their curiosity is immediately and regularly reinforced through clear and distinct acquisitions. – It is necessary to point out the potential danger, within the teaching/learning situation, arising out of the often negative amusement and objection of large numbers of young language learners faced with this kind of picture in the language class. Since pictorial media are associated by the pupils with both aesthetic appeal and the concept of aid to learning, it may well be that the barriers to smooth learning under the given circumstances stem from the picture code's inherent ugliness and the students' belief, coupled with their objection to the fact that there is here a lack of straightforwardness of subject presentation. It is the writers' contention that such pseudo-mathematical and pseudo-artistic visualisation MUST

7 J. Guénot, *Pédagogie Audio-Visuelle* (Paris, 1964), p. 120.

be kept out of our audio-visual language courses, because we do not know as yet what its cumulative, global and permanent effect on the majority of learners will be.—
We would agree with Mialaret when he says that it is evident that with certain groups of learners the effectiveness of audio-visual techniques can be appreciated in terms of intelligence, logic and clear and distinct acquisitions, whilst with many groups of learners it is the affective zones, the emotions and feelings, which have been touched and transformed.[8]
Coded symbol forms are not generally regarded as an art form,[9] but large numbers of language learners faced with picture code in audio-visual language teaching tools *object* to visual communication once or twice removed precisely because they expect such teaching aids to be attractive if simplified representational ART as well as clear functional media, and because they expect drawings in audio-visual courses to do better than provide hit and miss approximations. Foreign language learners in schools expect and are entitled to expect a better quality product of mediating representational art in audio-visual courses than that associated with yester-year's second-rate comic strips and their so-called conventions, irrespective of the fact that from the age of 10–11 certain graphic conventions are understood by our children.

Text-picture equivalences

The authors of the Audio-Visual English course, *Lend Me Your Ear*,[10] attempt to justify a "one to one correspondence", that is the creation of a visual counterpart for every dialogue segment of their course. In his *Pédagogie Audio-Visuelle des Débuts de l'Anglais* Jean Guénot gives the following example of such supposedly successful equivalence.[11]
On a first drawing we are shown a man typing. Beside him lies a thin sheaf of papers. A second drawing depicts the same man still typing. Now the pile of papers lying next to him is bigger. The quantitative difference in the two drawings lies in the pile of paper. We have seen an increase in visual 'semantemes'. Some time has elapsed between the two drawings. Some additional work has been completed. "Let us imagine," says Guénot, "that the man shown typing is depicted on a yellow background," yellow being the arbitrary code indicating pastness. Through the window can be seen the crescent of the moon. Superimposed on the whole scene there is a big question mark. The English sentence which might accompany this drawing would be the following: "Did Smith type last night?" – The visual semanteme "last night" is supposed to be conveyed through the crescent of the moon. – One of the questions which arise here is whether action in the past cannot be visually mediated except through a colour code (here yellow). If it can be mediated without recourse to super-imposition of colour code, this procedure would appear most undesirable both pedagogically, linguistically, artistically and from the aesthetic point of view.
What can be mediated through primary visualisation, based on the principles of didactic organisation set out in this paper, should not be distorted into an un-natural visualisation.
Again if futurity can be expressed through means other than a colour background code this procedure is similarly highly questionable.
If we show a picture of the same person smoking a pipe nine times in the same frame, this picture to mediate "Daddy always smokes his pipe" – if a man is shown

8 G. Mialaret, *Psychology of the Use of Audio-Visual Aids in Primary Schools* (Unesco, 1966), p. 17.
9 G. Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York, 1955), pp. 63, 64, 104.
10 J. Guénot, *Lend Me Your Ear* (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Saint-Cloud, 1966).
11 Op. cit., p. 142.

three times smoking a cigarette on a white background, with six faces of the same man not smoking, the two components being combined into one picture supposed to mediate "I smoke a cigarette sometimes", and if another man is shown six times smoking a cigarette on a white background as against three faces of the same man without cigarette, the whole visual to mediate "he smokes often" (lesson 16, *Lend Me Your Ear*)[12] we might ask ourselves whether the adverbs always, sometimes and often, have been clearly conveyed by means of the visual auxiliary, or whether these concepts have in fact not been cogently mediated pictorially because they cannot be so mediated. It is to be questioned whether any outstanding artist should or would agree to be a party to establishing an extended 'convention' which certainly does not (uniformly) make for clarity and unambiguous mediation of a particular point of language. Indeed we are told by the author of this highly informative and valuable thesis «nous avons généralisé des procédés simples qui semblaient indignes au dessinateur.»[13] If it is found necessary to clarify the sense of all 'images – phrases' in a given audio-visual language course through prior explanation and conditioning in the *mother tongue* the question must be asked whether there is really any purpose in providing what ought to be a mediating link, a bridge built to *avoid* the use of the mother tongue.

It must be stated emphatically that we cannot establish a 'one to one correspondence' between each and every segment of dialogue making up the grammatical fables of certain audio-visual courses and their visually supposedly exactly parallel and minimally ambiguous counterparts, even if we resort to a degree of 'codage' which in its complexity – arising out of the erroneous belief in more precise readability and the possibility of such one to one correspondences – clearly impedes straightforward language learning, particularly on a secondary and primary level. Pictures which without prior mother tongue conditioning often keep students guessing at just what exactly these pictures are to convey cannot be said to be optimally functional or desirable.

We cannot invest the supposed visual representation of any and every sentence of an anecdote in dialogue form only with the rigour of a language, whatever artifice we may resort to, aimed at impregnating all illustrations of an audio-visual course with such additional linguistic rigour.

One of the most urgent tasks of applied linguistics research will now have to be to find a happy balance and union between short narrative or descriptive texts aimed at presenting one or two 'grammatical virtues' each, and an adequate element of dialogue built into these short texts *and* their pictorial counterparts, thus enabling the visually mediating counterparts to each of these textual vehicles to function optimally – that is with quite minimal ambiguity. It is a fact that the visual components of cues for such a language teaching tool will NOT require the superimposition of a picture code on the primary visual reality, since the texts will not predominantly be presented in dialogue form, with a concomitant reduction in fragmentation of thought processes and abstract concepts. Visual correspondences to dialogue forms would be provided only where the mediating picture will function optimally without recourse to illustrational codage. A team of audio-visual researchers, including at least one methodologist, who should also be artistically and creatively highly competent, as well as a small unit of outstanding graphic research officers and a psychologists, could undoubtedly make very considerable advances along the lines here outlined. The original conception of such teaching tools, in which texts and their non-coded-visual correspondences are of near equal im-

12 See note 10.
13 J. Guénot, op. cit., p. 141.

portance, should undoubtedly originate in the mind of the media researcher cum artist.

Whatever audio-visual language teaching tool is finally found to be most adequate from every point of view, one can agree with Greimas that the visual constituent of such a teaching tool should translate all the grammatical and semiological categories of the target language.[14] – When, on the other hand, we are told by the same authority that part of the dual rôle of the picture is that it must be understood and "accordingly must be composed only on materials to be found in the sign-culture of the mother tongue community" [15] ... we have to enter a definite caveat.

Gesture significances

The picture must certainly be comprehensible to the learner/viewer. But this requirement does not mean that we must ban from the pictorial reality elements to be found in the sign-culture of the target language though we may have to be selective. The fact that a Turk learning English may see a picture tied to the sentence 'he is opening a window' will not prevent him from comprehending the action visually presented, even if the window shown is of a type foreign to him, as long as the artist has drawn this moment well. In trying to superimpose on the target language sign-culture gestures which are only meaningful and acceptable in the mother tongue gesture repertoire we arrive at a distortion and falsification of the target language gesture repertoire. – In lesson 17 of *Lend Me Your Ear* [16] picture No. 6 is supposed to mediate the question "how did you like Australia, Richard?" Richard is shown making one gesture of approval and one of disapproval, with Australia drawn in between, the whole shown with a question mark. Let us only analyse the gesture of approval and pleasure, supposed to mediate "I like Australia a lot." Would an Englishman make the kind of eloquent gesture the French certainly would make, namely – a bringing together of thumb and index finger? The kind of gesture we might well associate with ‹ce chapeau vous va à merveille› or ‹c'était un repas excelient›. Having misrepresented the target language sign-culture we must ask ourselves where this kind of practice will end, and what effect it may have on the learner, once he moves within the target language reality.

Though the artist and authors might claim that we have here relevant motivational and clarifying devices which arouse the learner to become more vigilant to the learning task at hand, the question arises whether such symbols facilitate reception. Does the human receiver have the capacity to process such superimposed graphic symbolisation? He is after all a limited capacity input channel.[17]

We may say then that in the didactic organisation of modern language visual teaching media the superimposing on the basic pictured reality of a set of additional, supposedly clarifying symbols, must clearly be avoided since they very often create an artificial, adulterated and distorted pictorial reality and often set up serious didactic hurdles. Quite insufficient research has as yet been done on students' thought processes and possible inhibitions attendant upon the work with over-complicated media.

Das sich Im Bilde Auskennen

We are, of course, interested also in the rôle of the teacher as a guide. For he must show the pupil how to look at the picture, he must not merely note isolated

14 A. J. Greimas, "Observation sur la méthode audio-visuelle de l'enseignement des langues vivantes", *Études de linguistique appliquée* 1 (1962), pp. 137–155.
15 G. Mialaret, op. cit., p. 122.
16 See note 10.
17 D. E. Broadbent, *Perception and Communication* (London, 1958), pp. 5, 60.

facts, but above all must learn to recognise the inner links and deeper connections of the pictorial flow, what Glinz would call – „Das sich im Bilde Auskennen." [18] As regards the principle of conveying the information content, it may be said that the teacher, even if only indirectly, is the author of the pictures. Spálený holds that the relationship between teacher and artist shall be a reciprocal give and take, but the teacher has the key position in this relationship. We are not now concerned with how to create the pictorial reality, nor how the didactic content is to be adapted to the level of performance of a certain class or group, but we are concerned with the conveying, with the orientating of the organised situations.

The function of a teacher could be characterised as an active formation of the order and the organisation of the visual teaching tool, based both on preparation and experience gained through previous use.

Imagine the following situation. A man and his wife are standing on a railway platform and are looking in the direction of an arriving train. This is the first meaningful element in the situation. The second meaningful element is their child, sitting on a suitcase. Which of these two elements shall be the functional one? The parents looking towards the train or the child sitting on the suitcase? Which of these two elements shall be the functional one, which shall play the key role in a specific lesson depends, of course, on the lesson aim.

Aim A: In a few moments the train is going to arrive; we might wish to teach – «il va s'arrêter, arriver, ils vont monter, descendre» etc. The couple standing and looking towards the train are now the functional element, and the fact that their child is sitting on a suitcase is a secondary descriptive detail.

Aim B: The train is late. Now the child sitting on the suitcase will be the principal functional element, and its parents will be discussed subsequently only. Only thus will the behaviour of the couple in this picture, and for the purpose of this lesson be comprehensible, since they are not looking in a certain direction because they see or hear the train, but because they are impatiently waiting for it. We might use this picture to teach the verbal construction with «depuis».

Avoidance of ambiguity

On the subject of range of permissible ambiguity, we conducted a little experiment with a number of children, based on the following situation: The pupils were shown a picture of a teacher in a laboratory, who has just completed an experiment and is asking a question. All the students facing him in this situation have their hands up. Question: Why are the students' hands raised? 30 children were asked. The following answers were given: They want to reply. They know the answer (60%). They think they know the answer. They have understood the question. They think they have understood. We then showed a follow-up picture, contrasting it with No. 1, of a boy looking distinctly uneasy, worried and uncomfortable, one hand on his chin and scratching his head with the other. Behind him, for the purpose of contrast, another boy, hand up. Question: Why does this boy look worried? Answer: He does not understand. He has not understood (70%). He is trying hard to understand. The problem here is, of course, to create a situation within which this concept of understanding is absolutely clearly brought out.

We must not suppose that the whole receptive apparatus will be functioning perfectly to perceive a weak stimulus; and on this subject, Dr. Anne Treisman, in her paper on *Selective Attention* (Cambridge, September 1965) has some very interesting things to say. Equally we must beware of leaving out essential detail in the sequence

18 H. Glinz, *Ansätze zu einer Sprachtheorie*, Beiheft zu *Wirkendes Wort* (Düsseldorf, 1966), pp. 38, 82.

flow, which might cause distortion in interpretation. Take this example: A postman standing by a door, holding a parcel in one hand. He rings the bell. No. 2: He is still waiting at the door, still holding the parcel. No. 3: He is leaving the house, still with a parcel in his hand. No. 4: A lady returns home and picks up a note inside the door and reads it. No. 5: At the post office counter the lady shows the note to the clerk and speaks to him.

If we only show sequence 1, 4 and 5 we might get for No. 4 – ‹elle ramasse une lettre› – and at the counter in No. 5 – ‹cette lettre n'est pas pour moi. Le facteur s'est trompé d'adresse›. While, in fact, we have a situation where the postman finds that no-one is at home and the lady picks up a note on which might be written – ‹Il y a un colis pour vous. (Vous avez reçu un colis.) Réclamez-le au bureau de poste.›

And, therefore, at the counter she might well be saying – ‹Vous avez un colis pour moi (You have a parcel for me). Pourriez-vous me le donner?›

We must be careful what gaps we leave in the flow of events in order not to have a shift of meaning.

Equally we must avoid blockage caused by weak key elements in the picture. In *Voix et Images de France*[19] we have one sequence, where the picture mediates, – «Claudine est étudiante à la Sorbonne». But the picture shows Claudine set against a busy street scene in Paris. The Paris street scene indicates that Claudine lives in Paris. But it is in this context a weak pictorial constituent. The picture shows a pretty girl living in Paris, and one might well get the comment ‹Claudine est une jolie Parisienne› and one couldn't quarrel with it.

I find it interesting, in this context, to note the reason why, particularly in certain European countries, and to a much lesser extent at first year University level in the United States also, modern language course books at first and second year level often shun what we call ‹dépaysement›, in other words a strongly pronounced couleur locale used in its widest sense. It is not merely that certain countries feel that they can and are entitled to consolidate their own civilisation through the modern language lesson, but they feel strongly that the immediate home and social background should be the basis of earlier work rather than the foreign reality. Reason: show a picture to a first year Russian student of English, of a man sitting with his feet up on a table, and he will probably interpret this as rank bad manners. But if the man is an American this need no longer be true. It may be felt that, at this stage, the young student lacks the experience and understanding of a foreign culture to be motivated to speak about it. A good many of us would not take up this position. We have a large range of first year course books embodying ‹dépaysement› which in no way appear to inhibit the students' motivation and ensure an easy flow of parole.

At the same time, while using all the systems of visual media, we must certainly have text and orientate the student increasingly towards an appreciation of and a love for text, as the picture helps him to become more fluent and loses in mediational importance. Knowledge of the printed word is in the final analysis, a primary and ennobling attribute, and it is finally through the mediation of the graphic sign encoding the word that we learn to go from utterance to truly meaningful communication.

One of the greatest difficulties facing the creator of pictorial media for school children, whether they are 12, 14 or 15 years of age, is the question of spheres of interest. Psychologically adults and children live in different worlds. It is not easy for the creator of media to cater for specific spheres of interest of certain age

[19] See note 6.

groups, and to consider always the reality which dominates their lives, and which must up to a point be mirrored in teaching tools, supposed to arouse their curiosity, and their interest.

We face the position in England of 80% of our children living in a highly industrialised and urbanised society. Their range of experience is wider at an earlier age, their artistic appreciation is often conditioned by poor art and their general environment may have a negative bearing on their sense of humour. They may be more blasé and more cynical, making it ever more difficult for the adult materials creator 'to tune in on their wavelength'. Yet materials must be fashioned which will trigger off moments of meaning and insight, so that the motivation resulting from recreated reality may, on all learning levels, make for increasing confidence between teacher and taught. We may well have to reconsider our sets of taboos in teaching media if we wish to avoid the charge of presenting our students with an emasculated reality within the four walls of the classroom.

If we were asked to point to the main difference between an artist's picture, not intended for the language class, and a teaching tool used in the language class, we would say that in the visual teaching tool, the communicating, the verbal constituent dominates, and that the emotional constituent reinforces the didactic value of the picture. Just as the artist presents reality as he sees it, so the designer-author must present the pictorial reality of a language teaching picture primarily through his personality and, in the final analysis, through the teacher's way of organising that pictured reality for the purposes of his lesson.

Unless the author indicates in his notes how best the picture may be exploited by the teacher, how apart from the specific language content which the picture is supposed to mediate, it may be a purposeful springboard and lead to extrapolation, something may well be lost on the way, and this must be guarded against.

Photograph and line drawing

Can the photograph be an important meaningful functional tool in the earlier stages of the modern language course? The photograph need not be, but often is, of very considerable artistic merit, containing its communicating and emotional constituents, and yet many teachers feel that they find it not the ideal solid, visual, teaching tool during the earlier stages, when the picture is entirely functional. The contrast between the photograph and the drawing would seem to be a contrast between simplified and organised reality on the one hand, and a non-simplified and diversified reality on the other. Every fragment, every moment of reality presented through a photograph is, from a qualitative point of view, always the entire reality. The drawing can be divided into units of meaning. It represents an outline of reality, a recreated, simplified reality, which comes to life as a result of the artist's ability and the author's creativity, fusing the dynamics of line and movement with the didactic organisation of eventful moments seized in time.

Of course new techniques in photography may very soon enable us to use the photograph in a series of teaching tools, as meaningfully and as usefully as the drawn picture. At present, however, it appears that a line drawing is valuable as a teaching tool in the language class, because it is also an abstraction of reality, avoiding redundancy where necessary, just as it is possible to give a drawn situation greater emotional content than to a photograph. At present the didactic organisation of the photographed moment of reality, the frozen image, is certainly a time consuming, quite expensive and complicated process.

«Les Images n'ont pas la prétention de tout dire, ni de répondre à toutes les questions posées.» We are not a camera with the shutter open, quite passive, like

Isherwood's character.[20] We recognise, discriminate, select, accept and process the stimuli reaching our senses. In the interpretation of our conscious world our brains select and thereby create for us just one of many possible worlds. That the effect of visual impact on the senses has a profound influence over our capacity to interpret our conscious reality is beyond doubt. In our attempt to narrow the areas of misunderstanding in the classroom and beyond it, we require the vision, the method, the time and the support to create new teaching media which are effective functional tools, presenting significant fleeting moments of life of a foreign culture, what Glinz calls „den bildlichen Niederschlag",[21] *and* those moments presenting generally acceptable and intelligible patterns of behaviour, so that units of sight and sound gleaned and captured from the pulsating world around us, may never be wholly shut out of the minds of our captive audiences, making many willing and eager to communicate in another tongue, and inciting some to study the recorded literature of other nations. In either case, language teachers will have contributed, in a small but not insignificant way, to a narrowing of areas of misunderstanding in our world. Who could doubt that it is a worthwhile endeavour?

G. FLEMING · E. SPALENY · J. PEPRNIK

20 P. Meredith, "A Taxonomy of Educational Media", AV Communication Review, Washington 13/4/65, pp. 374-384.
21 H. Glinz, op. cit., pp. 34-41.

Le Français Accéléré

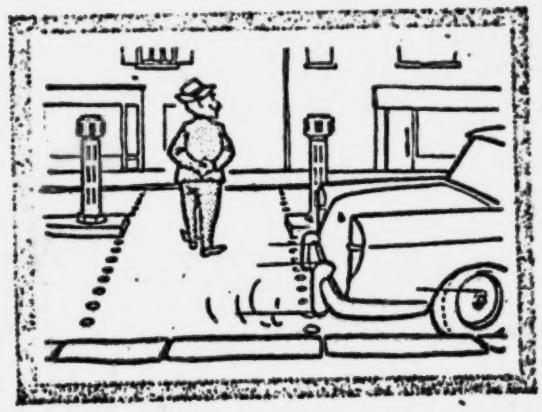
– Regardez!
– Oui, je regarde.

– Ne regardez pas!
– Non, je ne regarde pas.

– Écoutez!
– Oui, j'écoute.

– N'écoutez pas!
– Non, je n'écoute pas!

– Attention! Regardez à gauche!



– Maintenant, regardez à droite!

Voix et Images de France

Non, je ne me promène jamais.

Je n'aime personne.

Papa, aide-moi, s'il te plait.

Explique-lui un peu.